

CASTINE SIXTY YEARS AGO

A Historical Address

Delivered in Connection with Old Home Week in Castine, Maine,
Sunday Evening, August 12, 1900

BY

REV. GEORGE MOULTON ADAMS, D.D.

BOSTON
PRESS OF SAMUEL USHER
171 DEVONSHIRE STREET
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OLD HOME WEEK IN CASTINE

The Home Week Association for the town of Castine, Me., was organized in June, 1900, by the appointment of the following-named officers: Noah Brooks, President; R. B. Wardwell, First Vice-President, and E. C. Bowden, Second Vice-President; Rowland B. Brown, Treasurer; Charles H. Hooper, Secretary; Mrs. George W. Warren, Mrs. C. F. Jones, and Miss Helen Norton, Executive Committee. These appointments were made by the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen and the Master of the local Grange, under the authority of the State Home Week Association.

Adopting the custom generally accepted throughout the state, the local association selected the week of August 6-12 to be observed as Old Home Week, the tenth day of the month being specially designated as the day for a more formal celebration.

A Harbor Carnival was held on the evening of Tuesday, the seventh, when a considerable fleet of canoes and boats, profusely decorated with Chinese lanterns, made the circuit of the harbor and went through a series of aquatic evolutions. The Lawrence Cornet Band discoursed sweet music from a float moored in the harbor while this was being done.

The morning of the tenth was ushered in by the customary bell-ringing and salutes, and at ten o'clock in the forenoon there was a parade of vehicles of every description, most of them adorned with bunting, evergreens, and flowers, the procession forming one of the most pleasing features of the celebration. In the afternoon, the United States Ship *Dolphin* having arrived, the officers of the vessel were given a drive through the village and vicinity. Later, a yacht race took place in the harbor, and a baseball game (between the Bucksports and the local nine) was played at Fort George. In the evening, the Common was brilliantly and tastefully

decorated with Chinese lanterns, the band played during the evening, and a reception was held at a pavilion built on the upper end of the Common.

At nine o'clock, a large company assembled in the Town Hall, among them being a goodly number of natives of Castine whose homes are now in other parts of the world, and who had responded to the invitations sent out by the association. An address of welcome was made to these by the presiding officer of the association. Vocal solos were given by Miss Isabel Wales, assisted by Miss Maybelle Wood, pianist, and glees were sung by a quartette composed of Messrs. Warren C. Philbrook, of Waterville, and William A. Walker, William G. Sargent, and Dr. E. E. Philbrook, of Castine.

On behalf of residents of Castine who were not born in the town, Mr. George W. Warren made a pleasing address, and Judge Warren C. Philbrook spoke for former residents of the town whose homes were now in other parts of the country. At the conclusion of these exercises, the entire company rose and sung "Auld Lang Syne." The evening was concluded by an informal dance, which was participated in by all who chose to remain. The whole celebration passed off without serious delay or hitch, and was very generally enjoyed.

On the evening of Sunday, August 12, a union service was held in the Congregational church, when a discourse, appropriate to the occasion, was delivered by the Rev. Dr. George M. Adams, a son of Castine, now residing in Auburndale, Mass. The address is printed in the following pages of this pamphlet.

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

The thought of the "Old Home" is something to touch us on the tenderest side, and is fitted to join itself with our purest and best emotions. The home of our childhood, the scenes of our earliest experiences, the place associated with the dear ones who guided our infant feet on the first steps of this perilous journey of life, — this must ever be precious to us, and our relations to it must be of value to our spiritual life. The house of God is no unfit place in which to recall the memory of youthful years; the Lord's Day is a good time to speak of fathers and mothers who taught us sacred lessons of duty and of righteousness; all that is sweet in the memories of household affection may well ally itself with the worship of our Father in heaven.

Let me ask your attention to some reminiscences of *Castine and its people in the last sixty years*.

The Castine that I knew best was the Castine of about 1840, a smaller village than the present. Court Street ran only from Dresser's Lane on the south to thirty rods beyond the foot of Windmill Hill on the north. Perkins Street also terminated near the foot of Dresser's Lane. There was no Broadway, no Pleasant Street above the rope-walk, and High Street extended towards the lighthouse only as far as where it now meets Broadway. There were neither streets nor houses, except the lighthouse and two lonely farmhouses, in all the section lying south and west of what is now Broadway. The lighthouse was reached only by a cart track through the pastures, with two or three gates or pairs of bars on the way, which must be carefully closed after passing.

But this smaller Castine throbbed with a commercial activ-

NOTE. — The brief time available for preparing this address obliged the writer to draw almost exclusively from his own recollections, so that the address has a more personal tone than would have been preferred.

ity to which the present town is a stranger. It was the business center for Penobscot, Brooksville, and the islands within ten or fifteen miles. There were well-kept wharves and ample storehouses for the supply of the fisheries at the Grand Banks and the Bay of Chaleur. In the early spring, the wharves were crowded with the vessels of the fishing fleet, shipping their supplies for a four months' voyage. In the summer came ships with cargoes of salt from Liverpool and Cadiz,—sometimes the ships owned here, sometimes French ships or barks with their red-capped sailors, giving to the delighted boys of the town our first lessons in a foreign tongue. Then came back the fishing fleet, deeply laden with their well-earned ocean spoil. On the first of January again, the fishermen gathered here to receive the "bounty" with which the United States government encouraged their arduous vocation. The amount paid in this way every year made an important addition to the income of the fishermen, and, as the result shows, was indispensable to the continuance of the business. From the time when the government ceased to pay the bounty, the business declined, and, so far as this region is concerned, has come to an end. The Deputy Collector of this port has kindly examined the records, and informs me that in the year 1857—probably one of the most prosperous years—bounties were paid at this office to three hundred and fourteen vessels, to an aggregate amount of more than fifty-nine thousand dollars.

Every summer one or two ships or smaller vessels were built here. The ships were for the cotton-carrying trade between New Orleans and Liverpool, which in those days proved very profitable. Most of the moderate fortunes which made Castine in proportion to its population one of the wealthiest towns in the state grew out of the shipping interest. There is a tradition—I do not know how reliable—of one ship built here, of the value of some thirty thousand dollars, which actually cost her owners nothing. The custom was, that one of the merchants—who found their advantage in supplying the ship carpenters and their families—would undertake to

build a ship, and, reserving a quarter or more of the ownership for himself, would propose to one and another of his neighbors to take an eighth or a sixteenth, as each might feel disposed. Those were days of long credit, the bills being settled at the end of the year. In the case named, the ship was built and sent to New Orleans, and the owners waited for the time when they must pay for their several shares. But the ship made a very prompt and successful voyage, and when the time of settlement came, there was nothing to pay. The ship's earnings for that voyage had covered her entire cost.

In those days, Castine was the shire town of the county. The court house was the present Town Hall, and the jail stood above it, where now is a garden of vegetables and flowers. The high spiked fence which surrounded the jail did not wholly hide the grated windows of the cells, and we boys sometimes gathered to listen to the shouts of the prisoners in language that was far from edifying.

I am a little surprised to discover that my own recollection of the men prominent in the town in those days, is connected in most cases with their presence on the Lord's Day in this church. At that time this was the only church on the peninsula holding regular services, and men of all denominations came together in this place. As a boy, I saw them here more often than elsewhere, and under conditions which printed their faces deeply upon my memory. Here at my left sat Hezekiah Williams, then, or later, member of Congress from this district. I remember with what lawyer-like intentness he watched the preacher, as if bound to test the strength or weakness of every argument. One of his sons, Edward P. Williams, thirty years later than the time of which I am speaking, was a commander in the United States navy, and lost his life in the Japan seas. The sloop-of-war *Oneida*, of which he was in command, was run down and sunk by the Peninsular and Oriental mail steamship *Bombay*, in Yokohama Bay. Commander Williams and nearly the entire ship's company, two or three hundred men, went down with

the ship. Farther away, still on the northerly side of the house, sat Dr. Joseph L. Stevens, for many years the beloved physician of the town, ministering also to a wide circle of patients in adjoining towns and on the nearer islands. Near him sat Charles J. Abbott, a younger lawyer than Esquire Williams, in later years prominent in connection with the educational interests of the town.

In the same section of the church sat Robert Perkins, the father of Elisha Perkins, and of the late Mrs. Daniel Johnston. Mr. Perkins was a farmer and shipowner, but especially known to the boys of that day as the possessor of a large orchard, the fruits of which he dispensed generously to us all. I remember especially his sunny face, which seemed always ready to break into a smile. Perhaps something was due to the fact that he was associated with my father in some business matters, so leading him to take more notice of me than he would otherwise have done, but I always had the feeling that, more than most men, he thought a boy was worth caring for, and so he won my lifelong gratitude.

Another kindly face comes back to me, as I wander in memory over the worshipers in this sanctuary in those days, — the face of my uncle, Thomas Adams. Much the same might be said of him as I have already said of Mr. Perkins. He was superintendent of the Sunday-school connected with this church, and his genial, winning ways must have effectively commended to many young minds the sacred truths he set before us. Of my own honored father, I leave it for others to speak.

The mention of the name of Thomas Adams gives occasion to refer to an interesting fact, which Mr. Noah Brooks kindly named to me a few days since. When the British had possession of Castine in 1814 and 1815, they established a custom house and collected duties on imported goods. After the war, the United States government demanded another payment of those duties. The merchants refused to pay, and suit was brought against them in the United States Court. Thomas Adams, as one of the principal merchants, was named

as defendant. The amount involved was about one hundred thousand dollars. Daniel Webster was attorney for the defense, and won the case. So much, in substance, we knew before, from Dr. Wheeler's valuable history of the town. Now, it has been learned that the money which the British collected was kept separate, and was known as the Castine Fund. It was taken to Halifax and remained unappropriated for some years, and finally was given with accumulated interest to Nova Scotia, for the founding of Dalhousie College.

I have spoken of the forms and faces which rise most clearly before me, when I look back on the congregation of my boyish days. There are others which I recall, but less distinctly, partly, it may be, because in their places in the church they did not fall so well within the range of my vision, — Charles K. Tilden, Sewall Watson, Charles Ellis, Mark P. Hatch, Noah Mead, Doty Little and Major Otis Little, who in still earlier days was the president of Castine Bank. Major Little's youngest son, the son of his old age, was George B. Little, one of the most gifted men that Castine has produced. It was my good fortune to be brought into intimate relations with him in college and in after life. He was for some years pastor of the First Church in Bangor, and later of a church in Massachusetts, but passed away in the midst of his years and of his usefulness.

Besides those I have named there were men prominent in the town of whom I have clearest recollection, as it happens, in other places rather than in the Sunday assemblage, — Judge Nelson, for many years judge of the Probate Court for the county, and William Witherle, father of our present citizens of that name. He must have been a man very accurate and exact in his habits, for I think I must have seen him scores of times, after walking up from his place of business at noon, turning in at the gate of his house on Main Street, at the very moment when the twelve o'clock bell began to ring.

I must add to this enumeration of those who in my boyish days seemed to have leading influence in the town, the names of Joseph Bryant, John H. Jarvis, George Vose, Dr. Rowland

H. Bridgham, and Capt. Henry Whitney. Rev. William Mason — Parson Mason, as he was always called — I remember to have seen here only once. That was when I went to his house to obtain a book from the Social Library, of which he had charge. His removal to Bangor must have been in my very early boyhood. Some years later, when I was residing in Bangor for a time, he very cordially welcomed me to his house.

I have referred chiefly to the men of adult years who were prominent here between the years 1835 and 1845. I must be allowed to speak also of my own boyish playmates who have passed away, — James Hale and James Brooks, brothers in each case of those still with us. They, with one yet living companion and myself, formed a quartette in which there were, as I remember, no discords, but always a delightful harmony. Many a chowder we ate together on the shores of Back Bay, otherwise known as Wadsworth Bay. More than one May-day festival we observed, in a chosen spot in "Perkins's Back Pasture," trudging over the hills at the sun-rising, laden with our supplies, and dragging our weary feet homeward with the declining day. Many a pleasant sail we had together, often in Dr. Stevens's sailboat, which one of our number could obtain when not in use. But they have now sailed far away beyond the horizon, and we who remain are glad to hold them ever in loving remembrance.¹

I have spoken of the sea and shipping as the source of commercial prosperity, to this town. But it is more than

¹ Mr. Joseph L. Stevens, in a familiar letter to the writer, recalls the names of some of the older boys of our day: —

"Above our generation, chronologically speaking, were Thomas Little and John, David Cobb, John Perkins, Otis Hatch, the Upham brothers, the Upton brothers, the Vose brothers, the Whitney brothers, *et als*. I know of only one survivor of them all, Thomas Little, who went to Dixon, Ill., some threescore years ago, and now is in high honor in that thrifty place as one of the pioneers. Then came Haskell Noyes, Thomas Adams, Thomas Hale, and many compeers, among them Noah Mead and Jacob Dennett, the Damon and Pythias of their time, jestingly called "Jake Mead and Noah Dennett." Here too was Barker Brooks, whose muscular swing of the bat would send the ball farther down the 'Common' than any other boy in the town. Then came our generation."

material success that the sea has brought to us. The ocean is an educator. Those who are brought up by the seaside have a new realm of nature thrown open before them. In addition to the natural history of the land, — the beasts and birds and insects, the trees and shrubs and flowers, — they have also the multiplied life which inhabits the deep, and that which plants itself on the ocean shores, — shells in their endless variety, sea mosses, the strange vegetable products which make their home in the salt sea, the lower growths which link together vegetable and animal life, and all that class of borderland existences to which science is giving so much attention in our day. The children who grow up in the country are educated in respect to the grandeur of nature and into an apprehension of the majesty of the Creator, by wintry storms, by mountain heights, by summer tempests and rolling thunder. But how much is added to the impression upon the young mind and to educative influence, where he sees also the ocean in a storm, the mighty waves tossing human fabrics like toys, and hurling themselves upon the rocks with a force that shakes the solid earth! “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.”

And the touch of the ocean trains our youth in courage and skill and adventure. Many a mother, to be sure, dreads this part of the education of her boys, and would be glad if it could be omitted. When her little ones learn to paddle and row and scull, almost as soon as they learn to walk, when they climb the masts of the incoming ships to dizzy heights, and with yet untried skill sail away to the islands or beyond the sounding rapids of the Bagaduce, the mother's heart trembles with anxious fear. And when later the nautical fever seizes her growing boy, and he can no longer be held back from committing himself to a sailor's life, and going to visit strange lands beyond the ocean, she is ready to wish they had an inland home, where the glamour of the sea should never have fastened upon her sons. But she may not be wise in this. The boys are getting a most valuable training. They are

growing manly and energetic and courageous. When the country calls her sons to her defense, when any noble sacrifice appeals to youthful enthusiasm and devotion, the boys of the seaside are not found wanting.

Nor is this yet all that the sea has done for us. The communication with other countries which belongs to a seaboard town has a broadening influence. Seafaring men get larger views, and learn to look on more than one side of a question. If Castine, with its somewhat secluded position so far as communication by land is concerned, had not found this outlook by means of the sea, there would have been danger of the growing up of narrow prejudices, local habits, estrangement from the large movements of humanity. But our fathers and brothers in many instances went over the sea. The tides of a larger life flowed in upon us. And instead of settling into narrow and provincial views and habits, we have become as a community, I am proud to say, in a good degree broad-minded, public-spirited and patriotic. This assuredly is a result which our favoring circumstances ought to have brought to pass among us, these qualities we are in all honor bound to possess.

When the question of holding the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876 was under discussion in Congress, it is said that Charles Sumner was not altogether in sympathy with the plan. At that time this country had not reached the proficiency of the present day in many lines of manufacturing industry. Mr. Sumner said in substance — I cannot quote his words: "It is unwise for you to invite a comparison with the Old World in the more delicate and difficult processes of manufacturing skill. They have had centuries of experience, while your attainments in this line are young and crude. You cannot compete with Europe in these things. You have no royal palaces, with their jewels and treasures of a thousand years. You cannot equal the painted windows and the marble statues of their cathedrals. But you have what is better, — the cathedral *character*, the free and intelligent and enterprising men. These are your true trophies. Here you may safely invite comparison." It is the *men* of Maine that have

made her what she is. Out of the earnest Christian spirit of our forefathers, out of the high moral tone and unselfish devotion of those who laid the foundations of New England, have sprung an energy of character and a strength of achievement, which have given our portion of the country an honorable place among the commonwealths of the Union. Maine is in the fullest degree a democratic state. I use the word, of course, not in a political but in a literal sense. Here, more than in the older sections of the country, men are measured simply by what they are. We have no old families with an almost commanding influence in social and public life. We have no autocratic leaders, dominating legislative action, and controlling political affairs for their selfish ends. I have no wish to disparage other portions of the land. I claim only that the free and fair spirit of democratic equality which belongs to our country, and is one secret of its prosperity, belongs in an eminent degree to our native state.

Mr. Whittier has contrasted the rich material advantages of the South and West with the poorer soil and severer climate of Massachusetts, but claims for the Bay State a pre-eminence in another direction, and his words are even more closely true, in some respects, of Maine than of the mother Commonwealth: —

“The South-land boasts its teeming cane,
The prairied West, its heavy grain,
And sunset’s radiant gates unfold
On rising marts and sands of gold!

“Rough, bleak and hard, — our little state
Is scant of soil, of limits strait;
Her yellow sands are sands alone,
Her only mines are ice and stone!

“From autumn frost to April rain,
Too long her winter woods complain;
From budding flower to falling leaf,
Her summer time is all too brief.

“Yet, on her rocks, and on her sands,
And wintry hills, the schoolhouse stands,

And what her rugged soil denies,
The harvest of the mind supplies.

“The riches of the Commonwealth
Are free, strong minds, and hearts of health;
And more to her than gold or grain,
The cunning hand and cultured brain.”

Castine is “one of those old towns with a history.” We have — what few localities on this new continent possess — a record running back three centuries or more, and localized and made definite by many points of historic interest which can be exactly identified. All honor to the generous zeal which has undertaken to guard against destruction these priceless relics, and which has kindly marked for us so many of the historic spots! This flavor of the olden time which hangs about the town is a heritage of increasing value. The changes which are sweeping away so many of the things that are old will never sweep this away. On the contrary, this — we may be assured — is a feature of interest which will grow ever more precious with the advancing years. As time rolls on, more and more of poetic interest will gather around the names of D'Aulnay, and La Tour, and Friar Leo, and Baron Castin; other pens will be enlisted, to add to what has already been so well done, in rescuing from oblivion the incidents and legends of the past, and in immortalizing in fiction and romance the events of our early history. The steady growth of antiquarian interest and research in this country is sure to reach after, and draw out to the light, and embellish in ever richer illustration and detail, the ample materials for study which belong to the events that have transpired here.

The commercial activity of Castine may have passed by, or may have been suspended, until the long-hoped-for railway train shall cross Hatch's Cove, and sweep down whistling through our streets. But be that as it may, there are other things we can never lose. The natural beauty with which God has endowed our native town,— the ever-changing grandeur of the ocean and bay, glittering in the summer sun or

thundering in storm upon our western cliffs ; the quiet beauty of river and cove and inlet ; the glory of the sunrise and the gorgeous painting of the sunset ; the blue haze of the far-away mountains, and the nearer vision of green islands, — emeralds set in a silver sea, — these rare, almost unequaled, features of majesty and beauty, no change can take from us and no lapse of time can impair.

It is gratifying for us who in other parts of the country keep the memory of our Old Home fresh and green, as it is for you who dwell still by the ancient hearthstones, to see that others, who had not the privilege of being born here, have discovered the attractiveness of the dear old town, and have come to make their summer homes with us. We welcome them, — unless, indeed, it is more fitting that they welcome us, the wanderers, — at least, I may say, we join hands with them, in appreciation of the beauty and healthfulness and romantic history of the town, and rejoice in the generous heartiness with which they identify themselves with our local interests.

The sons and daughters of Castine who have gone out from the Old Home are found in almost every state of the Union, and more or less in foreign lands. Fifty years ago, when the ships sailed from this port every autumn to New Orleans, there were many from here in that city ; and now Castine is represented there, if not by new accessions, at least by the children and grandchildren of those who were born here. To-day Boston is full of Castine boys. They are found in Bangor and Portland, in New York and Philadelphia, in Chicago and St. Louis, in Cincinnati and Minneapolis and San Francisco. We hear of them in Jamaica and Hawaii, and on the shores of China and Japan.

We do not forget those who with patriotic devotion went out from us to the war, some of them, alas, not to return. They gave their lives for the country, at Bull Run and Cold Harbor, at Hall's Hill and at Gettysburg. Out of the one hundred and thirty-seven who enlisted in the army and navy, twenty-three of whom there is record, fell in battle or died

in the service. Let their names be cherished in grateful remembrance in all generations !

Of the sons and daughters of the town who have found their later homes elsewhere, a goodly number are here to-day, or have been here for the festivities of the week. We have come back in response to your kind invitation. We come with glad greetings to you who have kept guard by the ancient watchfires, and with quickening affection for the Old Home. We miss many faces that once were dear to us, but we rejoice that we are not forgotten, and that there are many still to bid us welcome. In our present homes away from here, some of us may wear perchance a sober mien under the duties and cares of maturer life, and those who see us there and who cannot look below the surface may call us sedate or even stern. But in Castine, we are boys and girls again, and the burdens of life slip off from our shoulders. The very air is a cordial which is almost intoxicating. The associations and memories which meet us here make us forget our years. It is a joy to us to find the old town as beautiful as ever, and to see that the generous spirit of local loyalty and regard for the common welfare has not died out. It is an abiding gladness in all our dispersions to look back to these cherished scenes, to people again the streets and the homes with their former occupants, and so to live over again the life of our youth.

Some lines¹ that were not written for this place, yet express so well many of our thoughts, as we from afar look back to these scenes, that we may adopt them as our own : —

“ Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea ;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.

¹The liberty has been taken to make slight changes in these fine lines of Longfellow's, in order to adapt them to the present use.

“ I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.

“ I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the seatides tossing free ;
And the foreign sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.

“ Half strange to me are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town ;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o’ershadow each well-known street,
Sway their branches up and down,

“ And the evergreen woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.”

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